

The True Development of Catholic Complementarity in Marriage
Humanum Colloquium

Rome, November 17, 2014

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In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Mary Seat of Wisdom, pray for us.

In this brief presentation I will develop the following points: *One*, the four principles of complementarity are revealed in *Genesis*. *Two*, gender reality includes sex identity. *Three*, sex and gender ideologies distort the truth about the relation of woman and man. *Four*, complementarity flourishes on a true metaphysical foundation.

I

First point: Four principles of complementarity are revealed in *Genesis*

The four principles of complementarity are: *equal dignity*, *significant difference*, *synergetic relation*, and *inter-generational fruition*. The marriage of one woman and one man is the prime model for all other kinds of complementarity in the world. When they live their complementarity integrally, respecting each other's equal dignity and significant differences, then their relation is synergetic. A simple way to summarize synergy is to say that one plus one becomes three. In other words, it becomes something more than just two independent persons living next to one another. The synergy of a married woman and man with the grace of God generates another human being. Then the complementarity of a woman and a man who are married becomes inter-generational; it flourishes generation after generation.

The Book of *Genesis* reveals these four principles of man/woman complementarity through revelation and faith. The principle of the *equal dignity* of all human beings is revealed in *Genesis* 1:26: "Let us make man [the human being] in our image, after our likeness." The *significant difference* between a woman and a man is revealed in *Genesis* 1:27: "...in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." The *synergetic relation* of a woman and a man is revealed in *Genesis* 1:28: "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'be fruitful and multiply...'" and in *Genesis* 2:24 "... they became one flesh."

The fourth principle of *intergenerational fruition* is revealed in *Genesis* 5: 1-32: "This is the book of the generations" and in the subsequent listing of the names those who generated one generation after another from Adam to Noah. This first record of intergenerational fruition is the recording of history which will continue and make possible the Incarnation of Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary in the fullness of time. This intergenerational fruition continues to the present day when each one of us here is added to our own family's book of generations.

The deep reality of the spiritual dimension of marriage permeates Scripture from the beginning of *Genesis* through the prophet Hosea's description of the Lord's fidelity to the marriage covenant: "...I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord (2:19-20)." This intergenerational fruition of marriage will continue until it is brought to completion in the heavenly marriage described in the Book of *Revelation*: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'. Let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price. (22:17)"

II

Second point: Gender reality includes sex identity

Much of what is revealed through faith, can also be discovered in the world through human reason and observation of the senses. This is the work of scientists who identify the forms of real things. Scientists also explain the embedded relations of conjugate forms within an organic human being, e.g. of cells in an organ or an organ in a system. Organic nature often has some exceptions to laws about the forms of things. These exceptions do not destroy the rule or a law. Aristotle described science as concerned with 'what is always or for the most part' true. Exceptions occur and remain in the lives of persons who may genuinely suffer from them, such as a person who may embody some ambiguity in sex identity or for a married woman and man who are unable to conceive a child. It often is a great suffering for a person to embody such an exception to the forms in nature. Yet the forms of what is always or is usually the case in scientific laws remain.

Philosophers integrate discoveries of the various sciences. Catholic philosophers also consider the relation of scientific discoveries to truths revealed by faith. Even though philosophy and science contain an admixture of truth and error, they are self-correcting over time. Since truth cannot contradict itself, eventually these complementary pathways of the human spirit to truth inch ever closer towards the one truth known to God and made available to us.

We are most fortunate to live in a time of history when many important truths revealed in Scripture about the integral complementarity of woman and man have been verified by science and philosophy. For example, when the authors of *Genesis* wrote the history of the book of generations and when Aristotle wrote his book the *Generation of Animals*, nearly everyone

thought that only the man provided fertile seed for generation. The contribution of ovulation by women took over two thousand years to be discovered and verified by science.

We know the truth about conception today. This truth confirms all four principles of complementarity at the level of sexually differentiated contribution to generation. Women and men provide a contribution of *equal dignity* to generation in the same number of chromosomes. They provide a *significant difference* in both the structure of one of the chromosomes and in the specific way a woman generates in herself and a man generates in another. When this way of relation occurs at the fertile time for conception, then their *relation* is often *synergetic*. When a human being is conceived and the mother fosters its growth through birth, then the real integral complementarity of the woman and man becomes *inter-generationally fruitful*. This is *gender reality*.

A simple way to depict the difference between sex identity and gender identity is to say that our *sex identity* is (always or for the most part) male or female. It is *one-dimensional point of reference* male or female. An infant has a sex identity verified by science in chromosomes, anatomy, and physiology.

Our gender identity is a *three-dimensional point of reference*. Its starting point is our sexual embodiment as male or female. Gender identity also includes the other layers of human existence, namely, our consciousness, our self-awareness, our maturing self-development, self-mastery, self-governance, relations with others, and often our relation in prayer with the God who has created us for a specific vocation. We form ourselves over time individually into a particular way of being a man or of being a woman. An adult person has a gender identity, he or she acts in the world as a man or as a woman. These acts are respectively feminine in the case of

a woman and masculine in the case of a man. So the three dimensions of gender are *man-male-masculine* or *woman-female-feminine*.

Gender reality is about the *whole* woman and the *whole* man. It is not just about sex activity. The married relation is a relation of *integral* gender complementarity and not just a *fractional* gender identity. The etymological root of gender, or 'gen', means to reproduce, to breed, and to generate. Sex activity is tied to sex identity, and in marriage, the meaning of sex identity, as male or female is *embedded* in the meaning of gender identity of a man or woman. Sex activity is not the whole of gender identity; nor is it an irrelevant part of gender identity. Gender *reality* includes sex identity whether or not there is sex activity. We all need to use the word 'gender' in its meaning of gender reality.

Unfortunately, in the history of philosophy, the lack of knowledge of a woman's equal contribution to generation with man led to a systematic, almost ideological, devaluation of woman's dignity for over two thousand years. The view of the male as naturally superior to the female permeated philosophical, scientific, and cultural attitudes. It harmed innocent women and girls in many hidden and other not so hidden ways. Many of those who supported it were blinded to contrary evidence. Many men preferred to be thought of as naturally superior to women. In the last hundred years a reversal has begun to occur. Many women view themselves today as naturally superior to men. This has led them to adopt an almost ideological devaluation of man's dignity. But today the truth about women and men is well-known. There is no excuse left to defend anything other than the equal dignity and significant difference of women and men.

III

Third point: Sex and gender ideologies distort the truth about the relation of woman and man

At the beginning of modern philosophy, Descartes reduced the human soul to a unisex rational mind and reduced the organic human body to inert matter. He also radically separated the mind from the body, effectively losing the point of integration within the human person.

In the last century two extremely destructive post-Cartesian ideologies emerged in the United States of America. They have now 'gone viral', to borrow a contemporary phrase indicating their international dimensions. The first, *sex ideology* arose in the works of Alfred Kinsey (1894-1956), an entomologist, one who studied insects. Kinsey reduced the human sexual act from an expression of genuine love between a woman and a man to a quantity of animal-like outlets. His research was filled with deceptive methods and publication of fabricated results. Like most ideologies, sex ideology harms the innocent.

The second destructive force was gender ideology, which first arose in the works of the John Money (1921-2006), a psychologist. He considered gender to be a fluid mixture of many fragmented parts of a human being. He also thought that these parts could be reassembled in various combinations from birth to the age of two leading to five, ten, or fifteen so-called genders. Money's research was filled with deceptive methods and publication of distorted results which were promoted on the unsuspecting public. Dr. John Money tried to turn a normal boy into a girl by surgery and other medical interventions. His experiment on this boy turned out to be a colossal tragic failure. Money, however, continued to promote it as if it had been a great success.

Before long, text-books in the social sciences spread these erroneous views throughout the world.

When Kinsey's sex ideology merged with Money's gender ideology they became a lethal weapon against the human person especially by portraying exceptions as the norm. Instead, the norm is that the human being is always or for the most part a male or a female and called into marriages and families. Many text books written by secular feminists continued to spread the virus of sex and gender ideology in wide-ranging academic, social, and political settings.

Fortunately, the self-correcting nature of scientific research has brought to light what was done in the dark by Kinsey and Money. Lawyers, journalists, and demographers like Mary Ann Glendon, Marguerite Peeters, Dale O'Leary, and Nicholas Eberstadt have carefully mapped the merged sex gender ideologies. They have shown how the ideologists moved into world organizations like the United Nations and spread distortions about woman and man's identities around the world throughout unsuspecting countries. Paradoxically, feminist support for ultrasound examinations of pregnant women has resulted in the destructing of disproportionate numbers of baby girls. From my perspective the killing of even one unborn male or female developing human being is harming one too many innocent person.

Sex and gender ideologies have also harmed many adult women and men who have been caught in their grip. Sex and gender ideologies distort the true equal dignity and significant difference of women and men; they ruin the gifts of synergetic relation and intergenerational fruition. Like a cancerous cell, these ideologies grow, often obliterating the true meaning of marriage in the minds of innocent boys and girls, women and men. Blessed Paul VI prophesied, in *Humanae Vitae* #17, the harm that comes when persons reduce someone of the opposite

gender to “a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires.” This reduction can reach the point where men and women begin to obliterate one another.

IV

Fourth point: Complementarity flourishes on a true metaphysical foundation

Gender ideology is built on a false metaphysical foundation which collapses into fragments of disconnected parts. Speaking as a philosopher, the false metaphysical foundation which describes persons as composites of multiple unconnected parts, or even of just two unconnected parts as in a Platonic or Cartesian dualism, can never support what is known to be true about women and men and about marriage.

In contrast, gender reality is based on a true metaphysical foundation. Gender reality needs a descriptive metaphysics based on real beings in the world; it cannot be based on a revisionary metaphysics which tries to make the world conform to some idea invented by a human mind. A true descriptive metaphysics is found in a vitalized Thomism, which is flexible enough to incorporate advances in contemporary science.

By Divine Providence and gift of the Holy Spirit, in the twentieth century when the false sex and gender ideologies of Kinsey and Money appeared on the world scene, several philosophers rose up to defend the human person and to provide insights into the integral complementarity of a woman and a man in marriage. Each one of these witnesses to the concept and/or word ‘complementarity’ experienced a religious awakening in an astounding gift of God to the world in its time of need.¹

¹ These and other philosophers include: Martin Buber (1878-1965), Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), Raissa Maritain (1883-1960), Hedwig Conrad Martius (1888-1966), Dietrich von

Rescue came from Dietrich von Hildebrand's claim that a married woman and man are metaphysical complements. It also came from Emmanuel Mounier's personalist defense that a woman is also a person. It came from Jacques and Raissa Maritain interfaith Thomistic circles in Meudon. It came from St. Edith Stein/Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross' phenomenological elaboration of the engendered experience of being a woman or being a man. It came from Bernard Lonergan's integration of the conclusions of contemporary science into a revised metaphysics of *hylomorphism*, of the form/matter composite structure of real beings.. And it came most of all from Pope St. John Paul II's elaboration of the integral complementarity of a woman and a man on the physical, psychological, ontological, and spiritual levels. Saint John Paul II can truly be named "The Apostle of Integral Complementarity." He was the first to provide a completely integrated theory of the integral complementarity of woman and man; he opened up new depths and breadths in marriage, family, culture, and the vibrant communion of persons.

Flowing from Saint John Paul II's apostolic activity of teaching on the integral complementarity of a woman and a man in marriage, many other lay, priest and religious authors have gone forth to spread the good news.² Some of them are present here today in this colloquium. I look forward to listening to the reflections of the men and women from the many different religious traditions present at this colloquium. Each one of you analogously bears witness to complementarity experienced and represented. Together, with the help of God, may

Hildebrand (1889-1977), Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), Edith Stein/St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (1891-1942), Bernard Lonergan, SJ (1904-1984), Emanuel Mounier (1905-1950), Hans Urs Von Balthasar (1905-1988), and M.A Krapiec (1921-2008).

² Alice von Hildebrand (1923-), Fr. Francis Martin (1930-), Jean Bethke Elshtain (1941-2013), Cardinal Marc Ouellet, P.S.S (1941-), and Michele Schumacher.

we witness to the real truth, wonderful goodness, creative unity, and radiant beauty of the complementarity a woman and a man in marriage!